India

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NOTES AND NEWS.

THERE is but little change in the accounts of the famine which appear in the Indian papers. Rain, it is true, has fallen over a great part of the Punjab, but elsewhere there is no improvement. In Broach the famine is said to be growing more acute from day to day, and in spite of the excellent efforts of the authorities to supply fodder at a cheap rate large numbers of cattle have died. In the market fodder can only be obtained at a fabulous price. The poor-house is full to overflowing.

The fallacy of the Famine Insurance Fund is trenchantly exposed by the *Friend of India.* The money has been spent on non-productive works, yet because this is supposed to have prevented an increase of debt the fund is held to have fulfilled its purpose by rendering borrowing easier and cheaper when famine comes. But here there are two assumptions: (1) that if there had been no fund available the Government would still have gone on with these works and borrowed money to do so; and (2) that the credit of the Government varies inversely as the amount of the debt. The credit of a Government depends on other things besides the total amount of the public debt, and may not be appreciably affected by the paying off of a small portion.

"It is doubtful," writes the special correspondent of the *Standard* at Simla (April 12), "whether the people of England fully realise the extent of the actual loss and suffering in India at the present moment." It is not doubtful; on the contrary, it is quite certain that they do not. How should they, when the information vouchsafed to them whether officially or by the newspapers, is so limited and meagre? Lord George Hamilton tells the public through the House of Commons that "the financial means and credit of the Government of India" are sufficient, and the statement reaches farther and produces more conviction than such pictures of the distress as are communicated by two or three special correspondents, writing at intervals to single journals. However, the *Standard's* Simla correspondent tells us that "the actual population of the districts seriously affected by famine is no less than 93,500,000, or more than double the population of the United Kingdom." "Stupendous figures": yes, and they "may well give people at home some idea of the tremendous difficulties of the problem with which Lord Curzon and his Government have to deal." That is, if people at home had these figures placed before them (for even the *Standard* has its limits of circulation and perusal), and, further, if people had the imagination to put life into the figures. "It would perhaps be no exaggeration," adds the correspondent, "to say now that the present famine is as bad as, if not worse than, any two previous famines, of which we have records, put together." That sounds serious enough, but after all how is it to be brought home to the minds of people that have not adequate or vivid basis of comparison? The Secretary of State can hardly realize the responsibility he incurs by refraining from speaking out to the British people in plain terms.

Are there any deaths from starvation—even as distinguished from official "privation" and "emaciation?" "In the British districts," says the correspondent, "the deaths from starvation still remain at a low figure." Well, we ask again, What is that figure? The correspondent—for he is a Simla correspondent—is as discreet as Lord George Hamilton; he adventures no figures. It is different in the Native States, however. "In parts of Rajputana, particularly, there is now no doubt that the deaths from starvation pure and simple are reaching a formidable figure." The short description he gives is harrowing. The correspondent writes:—

> Such lives might possibly be saved were it possible to make the organisation of famine relief in Native territory as perfect as it is in British districts. But the thing is impossible. The area affected is so enormous, the population of that area so huge, and the measure of the distress so unprecedented, that had Lord Curzon doubled the number of officers that are actually available, it might well be doubted whether it would be possible to prevent deaths from starvation. . . . And though the number of deaths from starvation in British territory is small, compared with the number in Native territory, yet there can be little doubt that such deaths do occur, and are increasing.

How cautious the expression, to be sure! Anyhow, "the condition of the people, in short, is getting slowly worse, and it is painful to contemplate what may happen throughout the greater portion of India should this year's rains again fail in any degree." At the same time, "what indications we have to go by"—indications of the monsoon due about the end of June—"are by no means promising." That is to say, there looms on the horizon of the Indian authorities the dark dread of a crisis to which the Transvaal will be the merest child's play. And the people at home are left in tranquil ignorance of the details of the forecast.

The correspondent's picture of the distress and mortality among cattle confirms the reports from other quarters. Speaking of the western borders of Sindh and Rajputana, he says "the whole of the cattle of this part of India are known to have died, there being neither water nor fodder for them." "As regards the loss of cattle" in the Punjab, "an experienced civilian gives it as his opinion that the mortality is already so great that a period of ten years must elapse before the Province will have recovered." From Rohtak comes the report that "half to two-thirds of the cattle have gone, and that it will take the district many years to recover its cattle." From Hissar, the most severely sticken district in the whole of the Punjab, it is reported that all the resources of the people "have been exhausted; cattle destroyed for want of fodder, and slaughtered by the flesh-consuming people for food." And so on—a melancholy tale of multiplied destruction, menacing the future of the country; for four out of every five of the population depend on agriculture, and what is agriculture without cattle?

The Special Correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* has been up among the Bhils. "Their crops," he writes, "have failed, their beasts have died; there is little left to steal; the labourers have forsaken the villages since the farmers' store of grain gave out; and now that meat is getting scarcer . . . . the position is desperate. As a matter of fact, with all their contrivings, the hill Bhils have been starving for months past." The difficulty of concerting relief measures for them has been extreme. The correspondent gives this description of a company at one of the poorhouses that have been opened:—

> The greater part of them were starved to the bone. Skeleton mothers were trying to keep the life in their babies—anatomies rather than living creatures; rows of emaciated children sat in silence, some of them clasping their heads in their hands and with eyes tight shut, others asleep in the dust. There were old women shrivelled and sunken beyond belief, turned to mummies almost, by the famine; blind men, and men whose eyes and speech showed that they were starved into imbecility, and here and there a figure—common enough on the famine works—covered with the pustules of small-pox. Altogether it was as forlorn a company as St. Francis could have wished to tend. And, worst of all, the cholera was there.

Surely such a description will bring home to British minds the frightful misery of this unparalleled famine.

"Without English supervision," wrote the Simla correspondent of the *Standard*, "famine relief works are of little avail." Well, we daresay there are Natives that have their weaknesses, like other people. But side by side with that opinion we should like to place the opinion formed on the spot by the correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* regarding Native officials on the relief works at Talwana tank :—

No Englishmen could have done their duty more thoroughly than these men. Vishnu Sadashir Khadilkar, the overseer, Hurguvand Dhaneshwer, the civil doctor, and Balvant Trimball Niphadker, the civil officer, had beaten back a desperate outbreak of small-pox, which had carried off a hundred people in the camp, when the cholera appeared; but, nothing daunted, they took steps for allaying panic, evacuating the huts, treating the sufferers, and guarding the water supply, and I found the work going forward at the tank as though nothing unusual was happening.

The correspondent gives particulars of the circumstances of a number of chance cultivators, which show how hard hit the people are. Yet the Government officials are serving their notices demanding payment of the current instalment of assessment. "Cold comfort this," says the correspondent, "for people who are brought as low as the peasants of France before the Revolution,"—*absit omen!*—"who have ruin and hunger as their daily portion, while plague and cholera stand over them ready to strike. To them appears the Government of the British Empire in the likeness of the broker's man." The idea is to get at those that can afford to pay. But then the difficulty of discrimination, and the horror of the process!

To the prosperity of Travancore there seems to be no end. Last year, it is true, opened with a nominal deficit of Rs. 5,61,213—though the accumulated savings in the Treasury more than compensated for this; but it closed with a surplus of Rs. 3,23,861. The Anglo-Indians do not approve of this system of hoarding, which, horrible to state, would enable the Government to forego a whole year's taxation, without bringing it to bankruptcy. In spite of the big surplus a great work of irrigation is being carried out. There are other things in Travancore finance which must shock the Anglo-Indian. Much more is spent both on charity and on education, art and science, than on the army. Moreover, the Dewan, Krishnasawmy Rao, is an Indian, and we have long been told that Indians are unfitted for high office. Nevertheless, the Anglo-Indian *Madras Mail* remarks :—

Taken altogether, there are many indications of liberality combined with careful economy in the present administration of the Travancore finances, and the Dewan deserves every congratulation on his present financial policy.

The Hon. Mr. B. K. Bose made some important remarks on the condition of the Central Provinces in the course of a speech on the Budget discussion in the Governor-General's Council (March 28). He said, on the general view :—

The year opened with disappointment and threatens to end in disaster. 1893-94 was the last year when the Province enjoyed as a whole the blessings of a good harvest. The fairly unbroken progress made till then was, in my humble opinion, due to the far-seeing and generous policy of a long-term settlement coupled with an assessment which, on the whole, was moderate, and in many districts exceptionally so, for the advantages accruing during the continuance of the settlement from extension of cultivation and rise of prices remained with the people. As the official records of the period show, a contrary policy had brought the country to the verge of ruin.

Mr. Bose confirms Mr. Romesh Dutt's argument on the point of long settlement with moderate assessment. Lord Lawrence impressed on settlement officers the principle "assess low." But bad seasons supervened after 1893-94; and, by a perverse departure from a good principle and return to a principle already proved bad, "the cycle of bad years has synchronized with the period during which many of the enhanced assessments of the new settlement have come into force." Mr. Bose goes into details on the pertinent points, and submits "that, with such a radical change for the worse in the economic condition of the country, a change is called for in the principles which have hitherto regulated the re-settlement of the Land Revenue Demand." Here are serious omens of bad political weather ahead, unless the causes of famine be dealt with on radical principles. Our Indian statesmen—and our British statesmen too—have been thoroughly well warned. Let them look to it.

The Punjab Land Alienation Bill is still causing much vexation, with anticipation of more to come. Mr. Bakshi Sohan Lal, pleader in the Chief Court at Lahore, has drawn up a series of questions upon the provisions of the Bill "for favourable consideration of the honourable members of the Legislative Council." Perhaps the effect of these interrogatories would have been greater if Mr. Bakshi had restrained the desire to be exhaustive, and had contented himself with a few posers on points of substance. He proves effective on the point of sanction of a revenue officer to permanent alienation, and on certain inevitable results of prohibition. Thus he asks :—

How a revenue officer is to come to a right conclusion as to the circumstances of a proposed alienation when in every case before him there is to be only one party, *i e.*, the intending alienor backed by a capitalist, *i.e.*, the intending allienee? Are the lambardars, zaildars, patwaris, girdawars, etc.—people easily temptable to bribe in majority of cases—to be the guides of the revenue officer in such an enquiry? . . . .

Will not the value of land and the credit of its holder be materially depreciated? . . .

Has the Crown any idea of starting its own banks for agriculturists, and of converting its revenue from cash into kind? If not, how the agriculturist is to meet his wants of money, if he loses his credit with private money lenders, especially when the harvest fails or the market for grain is bad?

The last query cuts to the very root of the Bill. The result must be to bring the Government more sharply face to face with the problem of the sphinx—the impoverishment of the cultivator.

There are also very pertinent queries on the effects of the only two forms of mortgage permitted under the Bill—queries that might have occurred to the framers of its provisions if they had had a modicum of experience, or even of imagination. As to the avoidance of existing mortgages of land by way of conditional sale, Mr. Bakshi very naturally enquires :—

Under what principles of good legislation, or of justice, equity, and good conscience, mortgages by way of conditional sale, effected before the passing of the Act, are declared null and void?

Are they to be void from the date of the deed, the date of the passing of the Act, or the date that a usufructuary mortgage is substituted?

The limitation of leases is shown to be cast in the form of a "wagering provision," the wager turning on the life of the lessor; and the barring of further mortgages or leases during the currency of the first is a strong restriction on ordinary notions of ownership. The Bill avoids every instrument or agreement purporting to hypothecate the produce; and Mr. Bakshi asks :—

What would be the effect of this provision on the customary right of the person advancing seed to have the first charge on the produce of the harvest for which the seed was supplied?

Perhaps it may be answered that a customary right is neither an instrument nor an agreement of hypothecation, but in any case the provision, if in one sense favourable to the cultivator, must yet shock his credit. Mr. Bakshi argues that the restrictions imposed on ownership by the Bill are "tantamount to expropriation of the hereditary agriculturists by the Crown," and such expropriation, wholesale and by force of law, is "attended with a political danger of more serious nature than that of a voluntary transfer by the agriculturist." Besides, "how can the agriculturist be relieved from the effects of indebtedness if the causes of such indebtedness—*i.e.*, the law litigation, the introduction of articles of foreign manufacture, and exorbitant rates of interest—are not discouraged?" Mr. Bakshi is a sanguine man, however, if he expects that his questions will receive "favourable consideration" in the Legislative Council.

In a few lines in the *Times* (April 26), a "Retired Indian Civilian" throws much light upon the position of the rayats in Bengal and the North-West Provinces and Oudh. He holds that the cultivators throughout these provinces "are rack-rented," and says, "these are the people who suffer most in time of famine." The cause of the rack-renting he points out explicitly. "Zemindars holding under the Permanent Settlement in Bengal have generally sublet their lands to tenants, upon whom the Government has, by subsequent legislation, conferred a privileged status. These latter, in their turn, have sublet to tenants (called *shikmi*) who are rack-rented." The Government is supposed to exercise restraint over the zemindars in favour of their tenants, but apparently its controlling influence does not reach the tenants of these tenants, who are consequently at the mercy of their immediate landlords. The "Retired Indian Civilian"

says, "this state of things is due to the mistaken policy of the Government in alienating its rights over the land." To a certain, perhaps considerable, extent this is true; but even then, if it has power left to safeguard the immediate tenants of zemindars, it must be responsible for the sub-tenants as well. Otherwise it abrogates its fundamental duty of seeing to the prosperity of the country and assuring justice to the people of every grade. The writer also infers the superiority of the rayatwari system—the Madras and Bombay system of direct settlement with the actual cultivators. But this system also breaks down before a needy Government and overworked or injudicious settlement officers.

The speech of Sir Antony MacDonnell on the presentation of the Budget to his Legislative Council is always interesting. His remarks on plague prevention, indeed, are now only what we are accustomed to, even from much less sympathetic rulers than Sir Antony. We have almost forgotten that only a short time ago such sentiments were held to savour of sedition. Here are the Lieutenant-Governor's words :—

> There are of course still great difficulties and likelihood of panics and unrest; but the people I think now know that it is our chief aim to work with and through them, and that we count our administration successful only by the degree that we succeed in carrying the people with us. We strive to realise what their feelings are; and endeavour to impose on them no greater strain than they can bear.

It is interesting to know that the *Pioneer* has always advocated this spirit. We can only congratulate our contemporary on having escaped all suspicion of seditious intentions. Sir Antony also referred to the need of police reform; for it is admitted that the high standard of honesty attained by Indians in other branches of the public service is wanting in the police. In the Indian Post Office the loss by the dishonesty of the officials is proportionately less than in England. Now the corruption of the police is unfortunate for two reasons. It gives the Anglo-Indians an excuse for maligning the Indian official generally; and it poisons that fount of justice which the present rulers of India have proclaimed to be one of the great blessings of their rule.

All that was foretold as to the bad effect of the new Act on the Municipality of Calcutta has come to pass. In spite of the cry that it was necessary to strengthen the European interest, only three Europeans have been returned, an official, an engineer and an insurance agent. The *Indian Nation* thus sums up the result :—

> The fame of the new Hindu Commissioners, we regret to observe, had not reached us before we saw their names in the list. With few exceptions the same is true of the elected representatives of foreign nationalities. Where then is the gain to the Corporation from the new elections?

To add to all this, it is doubtful whether the elections were legally held. Mr. Justice Sale has expressed his doubts. The new Act was only to come in force on April 1. The elections took place earlier, and yet were not held in accordance with the old law. Therefore, it is thought by some, according to the *Hindu*, that the Municipality is not properly constituted, and that the year's taxes cannot legally be claimed.

The first meeting of the new Calcutta municipality was watched with some interest. The *Englishman*, which favoured the "reform," professes to be pleased with the business-like ways of the new body. But a correspondent of the *Friend of India* gives a very different picture, supported by a specific instance of the unbusiness-like proceedings. According to this writer, after the voting papers for the General Committee had been distributed, filled in, collected and the votes recorded, the chairman found it necessary to take the votes again, and to circulate blank papers for that purpose. It was objected that, the voting having already taken place, this second vote was irregular, and that, the names having to be written by the voters, it was no longer secret voting as provided by law. But the objections were not heeded.

The *Tribune* gives a list of several recent cases of alleged assaults by Europeans on Indians. Here is one. Babu Makhan Lal Chatterjee and Mr. Murray were hurrying along a Calcutta street in opposite directions. They accidentally collided. What happened then is in dispute; but when the police came up they found the babu bleeding, and took both into custody on a charge of rioting in the public street. Mr. Murray was released on Rs. 25 bail and did not appear again. The Indian was acquitted, and is now prosecuting the European for an assault.

It is stated by the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* that in view of the troubles arising through the issue of shooting passes the following order has been issued by the military authorities :—

> The Lieutenant-General, Commanding the Bengal Forces, lately warned all British corps in the command that in any case where an accident occurs owing to a breach of the shooting pass rules, or of any of the other orders issued on the subject, the regiment, battery, or battalion concerned will be deprived altogether of the privilege of shooting, and the Officer Commanding will be prohibited from granting any shooting passes whatever.

Moreover, it is announced that where there have been affrays between soldiers and villagers during the last cold weather no shooting passes will be given in the battalions or batteries to which the soldiers belonged.

Mr. Lloyd, the Deputy Magistrate at Chaibassa, some little time ago assaulted a pleader. When he was called upon to explain his conduct it was reported that he feigned madness. The Hon. Surendra Nath Banerjea has asked a question concerning the case in the Bengal Legislative Council. From the answer it does not appear whether Mr. Lloyd feigned madness or not, but it was explained that he was only transferred and not otherwise punished because the man who was assaulted had generously forgiven his assailant. On this Mr. Lloyd writes a letter to the *Englishman*, in which he says :—

> I beg to state that it is perfectly true that I belaboured that gentleman (the pleader) with a stick, but it's a lie to assert that I feigned madness. . . .

And he is very angry to think that a member of the Legislative Council should give voice to such a calumny. As to the trifle of the stick, that he admits gaily enough, but of any gratitude for the pleader's generosity there is no trace.

A case of great legal hardship has arisen in the Punjab. According to the *Punjab Law Reporter* two suitors who were anxious to proceed with their cases were unable to attend the courts or to obtain court fee stamps, because under plague regulations they were unable to leave the district in which they were residing. The judges of first instance did their best to prevent a miscarriage of justice by issuing the plaints unstamped, the stamps being affixed at a later stage; but the High Court has now held that this was not legal. Surely, however, some means should be found whereby plague regulations would not interfere with the course of justice.

The Durban papers of March 15 report at length the proceedings at a remarkable demonstration of the loyalty of the Natal Indians—"an absolutely spontaneous outburst," says the *Natal Mercury* (March 17)—at a great meeting the night before. Sir John Robinson presided, and many European gentlemen were present. Resolutions in generous appreciation of Lord Roberts and Generals Buller and White were proposed, seconded, and supported by Indians, and passed by acclamation. Sir John Robinson said :—

> Though you were debarred from actual service in the field, you were able to do excellent work in succouring the wounded. I cannot too warmly compliment your able countryman, Mr. Gandhi, upon his timely, unselfish, and most useful action in voluntarily organising a corps of bearers for ambulance work at the front at a moment when their labours were sorely needed in discharging arduous duties which experience showed to be by no means devoid of peril. All engaged in that service deserve the grateful recognition of the community.

At a later stage, the Mayor of Durban "thanked the Indian community for their loyalty during the last four months or so," and especially complimented them for having taken upon themselves the burden of maintaining such of their fellow-countrymen as had been compelled to come down from the interior for refuge at Durban. The despised Indians have extorted a public expression of respect and admiration even from the foremost men in Natal. We shall be interested to see how long this very altered feeling will survive the period of storm and stress.

THE MAJORITY REPORT.

THE report of the majority of the Indian Expenditure Commission has fallen grievously short of reasonable anticipation in its conclusions and recommendations. Yet the Commissioners have patiently surveyed a very large field in considerable detail, and it will be desirable for us to explore from time to time the more important parts of their work in the light of the evidence laid before them, and in the light of knowledge gleaned elsewhere. Limited as the labours of the Commission have been—limited carefully and stringently and consistently—they yet strike deeply towards the roots of many of the most mischievous cankers that are eating away the life of Indian administration and imperilling the Imperial position. The Majority Report, therefore, taken with the profoundly suggestive Minority Report, and further qualified by several important "Reservations" of members of the majority, constitutes a notable landmark in the criticism of Indian financial methods, processes, and results. On a restricted scale and with less thoroughness it recalls the investigations into the conduct of the affairs of the Company at intervals of twenty years; and it strongly impresses the public advantage of a similar enquiry into the other great departments of the Government of India. It places a crown of glory—the glory of effective usefulness—upon the political career of its originator, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji. On the present occasion we take another general glance at the Majority's conclusions.

There is little desire anywhere to contest the opinion of the Majority that the financial machinery is well organised; and probably there is little adverse criticism to be passed upon the efficiency of the control upon its action—so far, that is, as such control is exercised by officials within India itself. The satisfactory working of the machinery depends upon the sleepless vigilance of the Finance Minister. It was the lack of a careful and intelligent central watch over the progress of expenditure in the several provinces, we are told, that "led to the grave errors of estimate during the Afghan war." There are serious reasons for doubting whether this possible cause was the real cause; but "since that time the system of report" is said to have been "much improved." The slower process of ascertaining the actual receipt and expenditure under the Indian method, as compared with the British system of account, and the difference in point of concentration of the Revenue authorities, are elements of weakness, partly unavoidable, but generally capable of being counterbalanced. The results very largely depend upon the capacity and energy of the chief officials. The Majority suggest—they do not go so far as to recommend—that the Revised Estimate should be eliminated by shifting the financial year into coincidence with the calendar year. The alteration would bring a still greater practical advantage in allowing the earlier discussion of the financial position of the year in Parliament. While the controlling power of the Finance Minister is held to be theoretically complete, there is some difference of opinion as to his practical power, and unfortunately those who think his practical power has rather diminished in recent years have no suggestions of remedy. The position of the Commander-in-Chief on the Council is left in debate, without any expression of opinion by the Commission. It is surely a pity that they should have declared the point to fall outside their order of reference. The Majority attach great value to the test audit of the Comptroller and Auditor-General, "if applied upon a sufficient scale"; but they "are informed that, as at present applied, it covers about one-twelfth of a year's expenditure"! They are divided on the question of the terms of appointment and duties of this officer—or one-twelfth of an officer—and fail to make any recommendation on the subject. However, they agree that "the appropriation accounts of Indian expenditure and the appropriation reports of the Comptroller and Auditor-General thereon should follow the form of the appropriation reports which the Comptroller and Auditor-General of the United Kingdom presents with his certificate and comments to the House of Commons." They also recommend that these documents should be referred by the Secretary of State to a standing committee for examination, and "that two members of this committee should be unconnected with the India Office, and that one of them should be the Comptroller and Auditor-General of the United Kingdom." Parliament would then be in a somewhat better position to criticise than it now is; but obviously the recommendation, though so far good, is essentially very ineffective. The thing is to make the Parliamentary control a reality, and not to leave it a dangerous blind on the eyes of the public understanding.

In dealing with the progress of expenditure the Commission took up a mistaken position to start from. They set about ascertaining the normal growth of the tax revenue in the period from 1861-62 to 1895-96, dividing the period at the year 1884-85 into two sections, the first marked by reduction of taxation, the second by increase of taxation. This "normal growth of the tax revenue" they sought by excluding the effect of increase or diminution of taxation. But, as the Minority point out, this enquiry was practically futile without a full understanding of the revenue system, which was expressly excluded from the reference by the House of Commons on August 14, 1894. The Minority present other fatal criticisms, but it is enough for the moment that the Majority themselves confess that "the records did not enable us to ascertain the exact results of the changes in taxation." By the way, what is the use of records that break down in this extraordinary fashion? It does not seem worth while to enter upon an enquiry on such terms. We have already referred to the very ineffective treatment of the Indian debt, which, however, shows how firmly that debt is fixed upon Indian shoulders. A fresh point in this connexion is well worth noting: how far money borrowed in India is in fact derived from Indian sources. "Mr. Jacob informed us that out of Rx.103,000,000 borrowed in India Rx.25,000,000 was actually held at home, that Rx.48,000,000 was held by Europeans in India, and that only Rx.30,000,000 was held by natives of India." And "the Government of India estimate that the market of India will not provide more than Rx.5,000,000 in a year." We must, therefore, be careful to remember what is the real significance of a rupee loan, and how strangely low is the Government estimate of the lending powers of an "elastic" and "prosperous" country governed by an incomparable staff of British officials.

The examination of the charges of civil administration in India is barred at 1875-76 by changes in the method of stating accounts. The Majority "have come to the conclusion that the cost of the establishments which constitute the 'general administration' in 1895 is not excessive as compared with 1875, and that their growth also has not been excessive as compared with expenditure in other countries." Both conclusions are curiously irrelevant. Why should it be assumed that the cost in 1875 was equitable or reasonable? And how can the expenditure of India on this head be reasonably compared with the like expenditure in other countries? One cannot but feel a shock of astonishment that such conclusions should be deliberately committed to paper—and to the public—by responsible persons. The particulars adduced and commented on are simply ludicrous in view of the magnitude of the subject and the painful complaints that have been made on points calmly ignored. It is left for the Minority to set this matter in the true light, as well as the burning questions arising on the non-effective civil expenditure, which, as we have seen, the Majority contemplate with complacency. "No revision of the pension regulations," they say, "would in fact be justifiable except after a full review of the financial working of the general regulations and proof that the burthen cast by them on the taxpayer exceeds the necessity of the case." The railway mania will derive an impulse from the opinion that "if the charge of military and famine protection lines and of lines under construction were eliminated, there would be no charge on the ratepayers—in other words, the true commercial lines pay their way." Yet there the charge is; what will it matter to the ratepayer if it be redistributed in the accounts? "Further," however, "there is fair prospect with improved exchange"—mark "improved" exchange (one wonders how it has been "improved" in the sense of lightening the burden on the taxpayer)—"that the charge on the taxpayer, even on the account as now presented, will entirely disappear." Yes; "disappear" from the account. But what we are concerned for, and what the Majority overlook is: how will it disappear from the back of the taxpayer? The discussion of the expenditure on Defence and Foreign Affairs is similarly vitiated by suppositions about the exchange, and by a divorce of the figures from the facts. Where is the use of telling us that

"the progress of the military and civil expenditure alike prove the economical administration" of such-and-such a period, when the policy on which the expenditure is based is wholly excluded from consideration?

The points we have already presented from the Minority Report show how ineffective is the Majority treatment of the apportionment of charge. On this head we content ourselves at present with stating the grants which the Majority propose should be made by the Imperial Government. The figures are roundly approximate:—

In aid of the charge for the India Office ..	£50,000
Half the military charges for Aden	108,000
Increased contribution to the charge of the Persian Mission	5,000
Half the cost of the transport of troops to and from India	130,000
	£293,000

Even £293,000 is not a sum to be despised. But other critics are nearer the spot when they estimate the debt of Britain to India, like Mr. Smeaton, at "millions upon millions." The dispute is not yet closed.

THE MILITARY VAMPIRE.

HOWEVER widely opinions differ as to the causes of Indian poverty all are agreed that the mass of the Indian people is extremely poor, that India in fact is one of the very poorest of civilised countries. Nor is it denied that on this poverty-stricken country there have fallen two terrible calamities, plague and famine. The present famine is more intense than that from which India suffered three years ago, but she has one advantage which she then lacked—peace reigns throughout her borders. It is true that the empire of which she forms a part is suffering from the evils of war in a way that it has not suffered for more than a generation; but so strange are the relations of England to her dependencies that her bane may be their blessing. The withdrawal of troops from India to protect Natal has been a most welcome relief to the Indian finances. There are, however, not only from the camp and the Press, but even from the Viceroy's throne, not wanting ominous warnings that this relief is only momentary, and that with the return of peace at latest India will have to take up her old burden. The man-at-arms in India no longer plunders the farmer, the victorious captain no longer ravages the plains and leaves a desert behind him, but the burden, though it may be more equally distributed, has still to be borne. Behind the soldier comes the tax-gatherer, in whose wake come poverty and famine. The peasant still as ever supports on his shoulders the military world.

The *Pioneer* at all events is quite certain that the burden cannot be reduced. It even says:—

> One point should be made clear: it is impossible for some years to come there can be any reduction in the military estimates. Thus the re-arming of the Native army and the Volunteers with the magazine rifle will cost in all nearly 137 lakhs of rupees, and of this less than one-third is provided in the estimates for 1900-1901; the transport scheme, when worked out, will necessarily be costly; more British officers are required for the Staff Corps, and their pay will be an annual recurring charge. Lastly, there is one reform which has not been touched, though it is of the highest importance. This is the redistribution of the internal garrison of India, which will mean fresh barrack accommodation, and possibly the abandonment of existing quarters.

Here, indeed, is a fine programme in part already sanctioned by the Government. It would seem, so far from a reduction of expenditure being probable, that a heavy increase could only be avoided by the maintenance of the garrison at its present figure, and the permanent relief of India from the expense of maintaining the troops which are now serving in the South Africa war. But the *Pioneer* is very far from desiring this. Even peace on the North-West frontier, which to do our contemporary justice it has always striven to maintain, is not it would seem to be desired for the sake of peace, for the avoidance of bloodshed and the prevention of waste, but only in order that the money which would have been spent there might be spent in preparing for war, not in expeditions beyond the frontier but in providing the troops in India with the newest equipments and the most deadly inventions of the day. It is far from our purpose to advocate an ill-armed and inefficient army, or to deny that the money spent on such a force would be money absolutely wasted; but it is a painful reflection that whatever be the policy of the Government, whether it be one of prudence or of adventure, whether there is peace or war, the taxpayer suffers equally. In the one case he pays the cost of war, in the other the cost of making the army a still more efficient weapon. It is recognised that a policy of wild adventure beyond the North-West frontier renders the re-equipment of the army impossible, but whatever the policy the taxpayer must pay.

The results of the present war in South Africa have been seized on by the advocates of military expenditure as proof of how much more was needed for the thorough equipment of the army in India. Every failure in rifles or artillery, in commissariat or transport, has been made the text of a homily in favour of some costly reform. And just as the money saved by the cessation of adventures beyond the frontier is not saved for the taxpayer but only for the military reformer, so it is proposed to utilise the gain to the Indian treasury due to the despatch of troops to Africa in making those that remain more efficient. The vampires may be fewer in number, but their victim is bound to lose the same amount of blood.

But even this is not enough. The absence of the troops is deplored. India is peaceful within and without, but the English garrison is depleted and the *Pioneer* trembles. Nay, not the *Pioneer* only, but a greater than the *Pioneer*, the Viceroy of India. Said Lord Curzon:—

> Because a man lends for a night the watch-dog that guards his house to a neighbour who is being attacked by robbers, does it therefore follow that his own house will be able to get on in the future without protection? There is always some risk in denuding India of any considerable portion of her garrison. That risk is great or less according to the conditions of the time and the attitude of neighbouring Powers.

The unanswerable good sense of the last sentence serves to throw into greater prominence the false reasoning of the first. For, to take Lord Curzon's own simile, the man who lent his watchdog to his neighbour would not be placed in a position of greater danger because his neighbour's house was being attacked. On the contrary, while the robbers were occupied elsewhere he might hope for immunity. Even were there more bands of robbers than one he would be in no special danger of attack on that night. But in the case of the present war the "robber" is one from whom India has nothing to fear. Even the most faithful believer in a vast Africander conspiracy has never thought of the invasion of India as part of President Kruger's programme. On the other hand, there are the strongest reasons why those who wish to attack any part of the British Empire should choose the present moment. If the risk of removing troops from India be great at any time it is great now, for never were the conditions of the time more favourable to an invader, and that not only because some 8,000 British troops have been taken from the garrison, but still more because the flower of the British army is fighting in South Africa, and because the reserves of strength have all been drained, because militia, yeomanry, volunteers, and even colonials at five shillings per day have been called into the field. Now, therefore, is the appointed time for all England's enemies to pay off old scores, but still they hesitate; and if they hesitate now, what will they do when the opportunity has passed and England stands ready to meet them with her full strength? If it be really true that the removal of 8,000 British troops from India would at any time imperil her safety, then their removal at this most dangerous juncture must have done so; and to allow those troops which she had maintained out of her poverty to be removed at such a moment was a gross betrayal of trust on the part of those who are responsible for her welfare. It is not the Indians who make this reflection; it is not they who blame the Governor-General or magnify risks, or who deal in exaggerated alarms. The blame that is cast on the Viceroy by these considerations proceeds from the mouth of Lord Curzon.

The *Pioneer*, indeed, commenting on Lord Curzon's speech, does not hesitate to accentuate the blame. It says:—

> Any reduction of our military strength would be a crime, a breach of faith to the people of India, whose safety we are responsible for, a temptation to the enemy at our gates to commit himself to that bold forward movement which he now hesitates to begin.

But if it is a crime and a breach of faith to reduce the military strength of India in a time of peace, when the invader would

know that he would have to meet the undivided power of England, how much more is it a crime and a breach of faith to do so, when so large a part of the Empire's forces is engaged elsewhere? And if there be a temptation to the enemy to begin his forward movement in quiet times, how much more now when English soldiers are fighting and falling in the remote wastes of Southern Africa? If he hesitates now, when it would be so difficult to reinforce the garrison of India, much more would he hesitate, if England had a free hand and could bring her troops from all the corners of the earth to succour India. It would seem then it is a crime and a breach of faith to take troops from India when they can best be spared, but right and proper to remove them in the hour of danger.

Far differently have the Indian people judged of the conduct of the Viceroy. Bowed down by their crushing burdens, they have welcomed the relief, and have even ventured to hope that it might be permanent. They have been glad to find that their ruler had a sufficiency of robust common sense to set at nought official traditions of the proper balance between Indian and British troops; nor have they perhaps been altogether unwilling to think that it was by troops which India had maintained and kept in efficiency, that Natal was saved from the enemy. And having taken the risk in the hour of danger, they naturally expect to reap the advantage in the days of peace, and to gain a real and permanent relief from the military burdens that have so long been borne. That this does not suit the military party is only what might have been expected; nor is it surprising that they should conjure up an enemy beyond the frontier, so generous that he has refrained from striking in the moment of England's weakness, while he reserves his blow for the hour of her strength. But the people of India feel no terrors. They know that their most dangerous enemy is within, and that the real difficulties before India are financial and not military; that India is never likely to be conquered by a foreign army but may perchance be ruined by the expenses of her own.

OUR LONDON LETTER.

WESTMINSTER, Thursday.

PIONEERS of the Parliamentary army assembled in the House of Commons as early as last Thursday, but the vacation did not really terminate till the beginning of the present week. Even then it might have been difficult to distinguish between the diligence, say, of the House of Lords and the indolence of ordinary people. The peers resumed work by sitting together in solemn silence for a quarter of an hour. Lord Londonderry gave them something to think about. He has rarely spoken in the present Parliament save to invoke maledictions on the heads of Mr. Chamberlain and other Ministerial Socialists; yet here he was, meekly seeking a place by the side of the traitors and perhaps wishing that he had been taken more closely to their hearts. Lord Londonderry has fallen from his high estate in a double sense, for not only has he sacrificed his independence but he has made the sacrifice for an office inferior both in rank and power to that which he held in the last Conservative administration.

Almost the first word uttered in the House of Commons when it reassembled after the Easter holiday had relation to the war, and that subject is still predominant. The week has witnessed a curious game of cross-purposes over one of the side-issues of the controversy. Mr. James Lowther, at the sitting of the House last Thursday, gave notice that on May 22 he proposed to call attention to the Spion Kop despatches and to move a resolution. Some members, thinking that Mr. Lowther meant business, were innocent enough to raise a cheer. Mr. Lowther did mean business, but not in the way understood by his applauding friends. The effect of his notice of motion was to preclude any other member from raising a discussion on the Spion Kop despatches by a motion for the adjournment. Not that Mr. Lowther desired to stifle such a discussion—on the contrary, he, like the great majority of members, wished to see it brought on at the earliest possible moment. That, indeed, was his reason for giving notice of the blocking motion. It would cause the maximum amount of inconvenience, stimulate irritation against existing rules of procedure, and thus lead to a revolt and a remedy. Mr. Lowther gloated over his paradox with the fondness of a parent.

Suddenly his scheme was threatened with ruin. Mr. Runciman, one of the youngest members of the House, made the startling discovery that by appropriating Mr. Lowther's motion and putting it down in his own name he might be allowed to initiate a discussion as early as next Tuesday. On former occasions of deadlock nobody seems to have thought of this simple device. Mr. Runciman was acclaimed by his friends as the St. George who had slain the dragon of obstruction. Mr. Lowther of course has the same object in view, but he would like to see it attained by himself. A battle royal between the two champions seemed to be imminent. Mr. Lowther appealed to Mr. Balfour to take warning by the controversy, and set about an immediate reform of Parliamentary procedure. Mr. Balfour airily rejected the suggestion, thus confirming Mr. Swift MacNeill in his worst suspicions, of conspiracy on the part of Ministers to burke debate. Great therefore was the astonishment when the leader of the House rose to disperse all those ingenious schemes and rumours of intrigue by intimating that the War Office vote would be put down for consideration on Friday.

To Mr. Swift MacNeill is due the honour of bringing about this apparently spontaneous concession to public opinion. Day after day the member of Donegal has administered pin-pricks to the War Office, and even when he has drawn blood the sympathies of those who should be Lord Lansdowne's friends have not been stirred. The apathy of the Ministerialists under such constant and prolonged provocation was too suggestive to be ignored. Under ordinary circumstances the pertinacious Irishman would have been either laughed at or howled down. Mr. MacNeill, perhaps for the first time in his Parliamentary experience, found himself welcomed by the dumb majority as a convenient and opportune mouthpiece. For two or three days the whole of the functions of the regular Opposition appeared to have devolved upon his shoulders. Still more remarkable was the fact that Conservatives as well as Liberals viewed his interpositions with patience if not with actual pleasure. To speak of Mr. MacNeill as a straw would scarcely be respectful, but at any rate he was able to show Mr. Balfour which way the wind was blowing. The accelerated discussion of the Spion Kop despatches is a personal triumph for the member of Donegal.

Has Mr. Balfour become pro-Boer? Did he, or did he not, dine with Count Adalbert Sternberg? And who paid the bill? These are a few of the questions by which the Parliamentary lobby was painfully agitated at the beginning of the week. Mr. Brodrick has since allowed it to be known that it was he who paid the bill, pleading in extenuation of his fault that he entertained this dubious angel unawares. Count Adalbert Sternberg was taken prisoner with the Boers at Paardeberg, was released on his assurance that he was only a war correspondent, was hospitably received in England by the Under-Secretary of Foreign Affairs, and if report be true, enjoyed the privilege of meeting the First Lord of the Treasury at a cosy little dinner party in the House of Commons. Then he crossed the Channel and with singular faithlessness took up his parable in a French journal against the English cause, and declared that he had been an active combatant in the war on the side of the Boers. Poor Mr. Brodrick has suffered a good deal of ridicule as the reward of his part in the comedy, but, after all, his only fault seems to have been in assuming that the Austrian adventurer was a man of veracity.

India has not been forgotten by Parliament. Mr. Balfour and Lord George Hamilton have emulated one another in the expression of pious sympathy with the people of the famine-stricken districts. Some members think that having done so much those eminent statesmen might go further still, and translate speech into action. They are too sanguine. On Tuesday, Mr. Maclean suggested that effect might be given this Session to the recommendation of the Royal Commission that the Treasury should make a grant of £50,000 a year to the India Office. Mr. Balfour smiled sadly and commented on the obvious impossibility of doing anything at present to give effect to the recommendations of the Commissioners. "You must remember," he added, triumphantly, "that the Commission itself sat for five years and that we have just received the fruit of its deliberations." In other words the longer a a Commission sits and the more laboriously it does its work the more remote is its prospect of attaining a practical result.

NOTES FROM BOMBAY.

"CEDANT ARMA TOGAE."

[From an Indian Correspondent.]

Bombay, April 14.

Lord Curzon is again on tour. It was announced that he would visit Quetta and Chaman before returning to Simla. Two days ago he reached the new place of arms first occupied twenty-four years ago, thanks to the ascendancy of the "forward" party at whose head were Sir Henry Rawlinson, ably supported by his lieutenant, Sir Bartle Frere, at Westminster, and Lord Lytton, equally well supported by his military secretary, Sir Pomeroy Colley, at Calcutta. The acquisition of Quetta was the first successful realisation of the programme originally sketched by General Le Grand Jacob in 1855, and vigorously formulated by Sir Henry Rawlinson ten years later. It was also the first external symptom of the marked change which had taken place in the old Lawrentian policy, sneered at as the policy of "masterly inactivity," which the Tirah and Chitral campaigns have amply vindicated. Those two disastrous events have proved to demonstration that after all the practical wisdom which inspired the great Proconsul of the Punjab to keep India within the natural lines of its defences was the best. The golden bridge across which Lord Curzon has now sagaciously retired is the surest vindication and triumph of the policy of that far-sighted statesman, than whom none better knew where lay the security and contentment of the Indian people. The recent withdrawal of a considerable force from the trans-frontier regions, the evacuation by the garrisons of forts on the way, and the renewal of friendly relations with the Afridis are all steps in the right direction, for which India has to be thankful to its present Viceroy. Less than a year of responsibility and a knowledge of the true facts of the situation beyond the borders have shown to Lord Curzon how far the previous policy, of which he himself was an ardent supporter, was a mistake and the cause of many political and financial embarrassments. The fountain and origin of all those evils was Quetta. But for Quetta the war with Shere Ali would have been impossible. But for it we should never have heard of the Kashmir embroglio, which led to the occupation of Gilgit, Hunza, Nagar, and Chitral. If these places, again, had not been occupied, the Tirah Campaign would have been an impossibility.

The advance of the Russians towards Herat seems again to have filled our rulers with panic. Quetta is being visited by no less a personage than the Viceroy. Things are being done behind the scenes which may come to light later on. But the Government clearly apprehend that Beluchistan may again give trouble—the Beluchistan which is a Frankenstein of its own creation. All has not gone right there since Quetta was acquired. We have heard from time to time of dynastic feuds and assassinations, and even of the deposition of one set of chiefs and the raising up of another. A Khan himself has suffered. But it is thought that the time has come when both the contending factions should be kept well in hand in view of certain eventualities which the Russophobists of the hour have conjured up. So the Viceroy assembled the divers chiefs, small and great, in a durbar and unburthened himself of the views held by his Government. The friendly advice given them amounted in substance to a strong exhortation to remain on friendly terms with the rulers of British India. In their friendship lay their security and prosperity. Thus much was to be read between the lines. None can disapprove of this friendly advice from the representative of the paramount Power. It is, perhaps, needed. Forewarning is forearming. The Beluchi chiefs, if they are wise men in their generation, must look to accomplished facts. They are, no doubt, vassals of the Empire, however independent they may have been a quarter of a century ago; and it is meet that vassals should be staunch in their loyalty and be able to prove it by deeds if and when a certain contingency on the borders of South-western Afghanistan comes to be realised. The Viceroy's speech so far was friendly, frank, and full of sage warning.

In quite a different vein was his Excellency's speech at Amritsar. There he has nothing but praise for the Sikh soldier, whose valour has been tried on many a battle field in and out of India. The Sikh is now an historical figure. He is not only the property of the British Empire, the world itself is proud to own him, for valour is universal and not confined to one race or one country. Then the Viceroy conciliated the Sikh hierarchy—the sacred one which holds its Court under the roof of the golden temple. Having pleased priest and warrior alike, he next patted on the back the merchant and the trader. He praised Amritsar's commercial activity, and exhorted the community to pursue unflinchingly the arts of peace. He praised the ancient handicrafts, specially the carpet industry, and asked, as Sir George Birdwood has been strenuously avowing, Indian craftsmen to desist from imitating the vulgar and inartistic designs of Kidderminster and Brussels. Here the Viceroy has really done a valuable service in raising his voice against the craze, inspired by travelling agents from the West, to follow European patterns. Indigenous industries need all the encouragement and support that they can get from a paternal Government desirous of preserving them by means of indigenous habits. So far it is, indeed, encouraging to read Lord Curzon's utterances on the industrial situation. It is to be hoped that he may have leisure to leave behind him a permanent mark of his encouragement in this direction. How sad is it to notice the decline and extinction of many an ancient and useful industry. India, which was once the home of manufactures, long, long before Julius Cæsar landed on the shores of Britain, by some curious irony of fate now finds itself an importer, and that to fully one-third the extent of its total trade. This is no sign of internal industrial progress. On the contrary, it is a sign of deterioration. Much will depend on the liberal statesmanship of India's present rulers to repair the flagrant injustice which some of their predecessors inflicted on it about a hundred years ago. India, it is well known, was the victim of the mischievous fiscal policy inaugurated by the East India Company. The gruesome history of that policy is written in indelible letters in the pages of Parliamentary Blue-books, to which few nowadays resort. Some hope is revived by the encouraging words of Lord Curzon. Let him convert his words into deeds to realise India's hopes in the industrial world.

The Budget debate has been the theme of excellent and healthy criticism in all the leading organs of Indian public opinion. Thanks to the prominent attention which the popular representatives secured for the subject in the Imperial Legislative Council, land revenue assessments in the rayatwari provinces have been elaborately discussed. There is a consensus of opinion that the growing impoverishment of the peasantry has its origin in the exorbitant demand of the State and the cast-iron method of collection. It is the latter which drives the rayat to the moneylender. Once there, there is no emancipation. The fact is beginning to dawn slowly on the official mind. The prevailing famine has only emphasised public criticism. It remains to be seen what practical steps the authorities will take before they once more re-assemble on the plains next year. This famine has already taught bitter lessons which should never be forgotten. Heaven forbid that the Indian Government should once more relapse into its old state of indifference.

So the Royal Commission on Indian Expenditure has after all submitted its Report. Reuter has supplied the Press with an abstract of both the Majority and the Minority Reports. Both were discounted months beforehand, and they have created no great surprise. So far as the summaries go, it seems that the Commission, like the mountain, has laboured to produce the proverbial mouse. The Majority Report, which is of course official, is a most disappointing document. It is apparently barren of recommendations. Whatever recommendations are made, with all the air of profound wisdom, are simply stale. India has heard of them for the last thirty years and over. We can only smile at this gigantic effort of the majority after an incubation of more than two years. But every evil has its good. The Majority Report has evoked a vigorous dissent from the three staunch representatives of Indian interests on the Commission. Courageously and impartially have they formulated India's real financial grievances, and pointed out the gigantic mischief of the annual drain of its natural resources, which is at the very root of the country's poverty. All honour to this independent trio which have nobly discharged their duty and who have so excellently focussed for the enlightening of the British the true wants and requirements of India. The Minority Report may be taken as a stepping stone towards further effort, till effort shall be rewarded by the introduction of the necessary reforms for which India cries aloud.

THE FAMINE IN INDIA.

FIVE AND A HALF MILLIONS ON RELIEF.

The Secretary of State for India has received the following telegram from the Viceroy on the subject of the famine:—

Relief continues to expand in Central Provinces, where a quarter of a million children are receiving relief in kitchens. Death-rate there remains satisfactorily low. It is considerably in excess of the normal rate in Gujerat, where effect of drought seems to be intensifying. Number of persons in receipt of relief:—Bombay, 1,300,000; Punjab, 189,000; Central Provinces, 1,639,000; Berar, 393,000; Ajmere-Merwara, 138,000; Rajputana States, 484,000; Central India States, 174,000; Bombay Native States, 591,000; Baroda, 76,000; North-Western Provinces, 3,000; Punjab Native States, 43,000; Central Provinces Feudatory States, 57,000; Hyderabad, 369,000; Madras, 17,000; Kashmir, 1,000. Total, 5,474,000.

(Through Reuter's Agency.)

New York, April 30.

A mass meeting was held here last night on behalf of the sufferers by the Indian famine. The Rev. Mr. Wolfe, who presided, said that, although he was an American, he would say that England had elevated the people of India and improved their institutions. A sum of over $1,650 was raised and a permanent organisation was formed, known as the Indian Famine Relief Committee.

THE MANSION HOUSE FUND.

Down to Wednesday evening the Mansion House Fund for the relief of the Indian Famine sufferers amounted to £212,900. The Lord Mayor during the day made a further remittance of £13,000 to the Viceroy, bringing up the total already sent for relief purposes to £207,000.

THE "INVESTORS' REVIEW" FUND.

We take the following from the current issue (April 28) of the *Investors' Review*:—

This week's help to our little fund has been but slender, yet it comes in ways that are moving and hopeful. Witness the ten schoolboys who clubbed their sixpences together out of gratitude to their Indian friend, Mr. N. B. Wagle, and sent 5s.

Subjoined is the list and amount of subscriptions received for our little fund up to date. May we again repeat that it is a fund, every farthing of which will be put to good uses, especially in helping the starved cultivators to replace their lost cattle, and that the more help we can give in this direction the sooner will the distressed provinces and Native States—for they cannot be forgotten in the present misery—recover some of their ancient prosperity? Cheques and postal orders should be drawn to A. J. Wilson, crossed Union Bank of London, Famine Fund Account.

List of Subscriptions.

Amount acknowledged last week	£451	3	6
A Knowles, Esq., Derby	1	0	0
A. S. Bye, Esq., London	0	5	0
Miss Macphail .. .. 6s. } (per N. B.			
Ten Ranelagh Schoolboys, 5s. } Wagle, Esq.)	0	11	0
H. N. Blackburn, Esq., Walsall	1	1	0
Total to date	£454	0	6

MR. DADABHAI NAOROJI AT EDMONTON.

[From Our Own Reporter.]

On Sunday last, April 29, at the Edmonton Town Hall, under the auspices of the P.S.A organisation, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji delivered an address on "The Famine in India."

The Rev. T. C. Collins presided, and in his opening remarks said he had a letter from the Viceroy of India, sent to Lord Scarsdale, Lord Curzon's father, in which it was declared that the present famine was the worst and most terrible which had been experienced for the last twenty-five or thirty years. Now, Lord Curzon was not the man to exaggerate matters, as anybody who had watched his career from the time he was an undergraduate of brilliant promise at Oxford well knew, and he had deemed it necessary to appeal to his father to do something to arouse the conscience of the British people with a view to preserving the Empire of India, which had been described as the brightest jewel in the British Crown. He (the Chairman) had also within the last few days had a discussion with Mr. Malins, the chief Good Templar of England, who had recently returned from India, and who told him that he had seen literally thousands of people dying by the road-side. Now, the small sum of 1d. per day was sufficient to enable a Native to exist, and surely in Christian England, and in the biggest city of the wealthiest empire in the world, there ought to be a feeling of sympathy sufficiently strong to ensure the contribution of the amount required to preserve the lives of the Natives and to redeem this country from the charge of inhumanity. For, after all, had India been left to her own resources she would have been able to cope with the famine. Lord Curzon in his letter referred to the fact that India had risen as one man to support by voice and by money our fellow-subjects in South Africa, and surely it was our duty now to extend to her a helping hand in order to extricate her from the deadly grip of famine. (Cheers.)

Mr. Naoroji, who was heartily cheered, and who spoke with much feeling, then addressed the audience. He had, he said, neither the heart nor the words in which to describe the horrible scenes that were taking place every day in his native country. His object in speaking was to direct their attention to the duty England owed to India, which had been truly described by Lord Curzon as "The pivot of the British Empire. If we lost our colonies we might survive, but if we lose India the sun of the British Empire will be set." (Hear, hear.) England owed her greatness, prosperity, and riches largely to India, and what was the reward which India had reaped therefrom? They were constantly told that British rule in India had been productive of great blessings and great benefits, and that it had made that country prosperous. That was what was said. But what was the reality? No doubt much had been done for India. But all the good was counter-balanced by one evil. They had been told that British rule had given them law and order; that it had given them security of life and property. But the fact remained that good care had been taken at the same time that the property should not be worth securing, and that the lives should not be worth living. Those words might seem strong, but he laid the proposition down deliberately, and he had said the same thing for the last thirty or forty years. He repeated that his country had been cruelly and unrighteously ruled, thanks to the system of government which had been introduced. Not that it should be necessarily so. If they could only substitute honour for dishonour and righteousness for selfish greed, they might have in India a system of government which would confer ten times more benefit than was now obtained by England itself and make India prosperous. It was unfortunate that, from the very commencement of the connexion between England and India, the system of government adopted had been one of greed and injustice. These were not his words. They were the words of honourable Englishmen and of Anglo-Indians who, for years, had been crying in the wilderness against the system under which India was ruled. In the last century the Court of Directors themselves and the Governor-General of the day wrote dispatches in which they described acts of the grossest corruption and oppression, and abominations of every kind which were inflicted upon the poor Indians. Macaulay summed up the whole thing when he said that the Englishmen who began the connexion were demons as compared with the Indians as men, and that they were wolves as compared with the Indians as sheep. (Hear, hear.) The Chairman, in his opening remarks, had referred to the conquest of India and had spoken of its being held by the sword. It was nothing of the kind. India had never been conquered by England, but it had been conquered for England by the Indians themselves. There had been many wars during the last 150 years, and it was by those wars that the British Indian Empire had been built up. Probably the British public were not aware that they had not spent a single farthing on those wars. India had been compelled to pay the whole cost, and that meant that hundreds of millions sterling had been exacted from India in order to build up the British Empire. Then, again, whose blood had been mainly spent in those wars? The answer was that it was Indian blood. The Indian Army was probably 200,000 or more strong, and the European force had never exceeded, even at the time of the Mutiny, about 40,000. It would be seen, therefore, that the whole British Indian Empire had been built up entirely with the money of India and almost entirely with the blood of the Indians. And, what was the reward they had reaped? At this moment they were the mere slaves of the system of government under which they lived. That was not all. It was not enough for England that she had made them pay every farthing of the cost of building up the Empire. She was also making them pay the cost of maintaining it. When the war took place between France and Germany and the French were defeated the Germans inflicted upon them a heavy pecuniary penalty. The wound was a severe one, but once the penalty was paid there was an end of all further trouble, and France was enabled to recuperate. But the case was very different for India. Rudyard Kipling had given them a very good phrase when he spoke of "The White Man's Burden." India had had imposed upon her the "white man's burden," and it had never left her neck. She had not only been made to pay the cost of building up the Empire but England had also drained from that wretched country millions upon millions, year after year, besides maintaining her rule there. Undoubtedly, Great Britain could trace the rise in her prosperity and in her greatness from the day she took over India. Yet how was India being treated in this year of famine? 85,000,000 of people were affected by the famine directly, and many more were indirectly affected by it. Yet they were being called upon to find two hundred millions of rupees yearly to pay the salaries, pensions, etc., of the European officials, military or civil, before they could have for their own enjoyment a single farthing of their own produce. And if they only took the trouble to make the calculation it would be discovered that India had had to pay thousands of millions for this purpose already. Was it to be wondered at then that India was falling and that the famines were becoming worse each time they recurred? The fact was that nowadays the slightest touch of drought necessarily caused a famine, because the resources of the country had been so seriously exhausted. It was only when a famine took place that any interest was excited in this country in India. As a matter of fact there was a chronic state of famine in

India, of which the people of this country knew nothing. And even in years of average prosperity and average crops scores of millions of the natives had to live on starvation diet, and did not know what it was to have a full meal from year's end to year's end. It was only when a crisis like the present one was developed that the Government was forced to intervene and to try to save the lives of the dying people by taxing these very people. The condition of India was an impoverished condition of the worst possible character, and one could hardly realise the poverty and misery in which scores of millions of the Natives lived. But if England were placed under a similar system of government would its condition be any better? No! Even nowadays England could not grow sufficient food to supply the requirements of her population, and yet there is never any famine here. And supposing she were conquered by the French and obliged to pay thirty or forty millions sterling annually to her conquerors, would she not be impoverished? Now India grew more food than her people needed, but because for one hundred and fifty years she had been subjected to a heavy drain upon her resources to meet the demands of England she had been reduced to a state of the utmost misery and impoverishment, she had been completely exhausted, and it was no wonder that famines occurred. It would be a miracle if it were otherwise. They could not expect to draw blood from a man day after day and yet that he should remain healthy. As Mr. Bright once said: "If you want to govern India for your own good, you cannot derive that good except through the good of India." He also said there were two ways in which they might derive their own good—one by plunder and the other by trade; and he preferred the latter course. But unfortunately a system of plunder had been going on for 150 years, and it was now time that the British people were awakened to the fact. As far back as 1867 Lord Salisbury, then Lord Cranborne, was acting as Secretary of State for India, and he pointed out that the system of government adopted by Great Britain in India necessarily produced a terrible amount of misery. He (Mr. Naoroji) wanted the British people to understand that their present governing system was wicked, and he believed that if they would only reform it, if they would only substitute honor for dishonor, righteousness for unrighteousness, and a true for a false British rule, the result would certainly be that India would prosper, that she would enjoy manifold blessings, and would no longer have cause to curse the fact that they were under an alien rule. If no reform were attempted the famines would go on increasing in intensity, the country would be reduced to utter exhaustion, and he could not venture to forecast what would be the end. He hoped that this, which was intended to be the first of a series of meetings to be held in the metropolis, would have the effect of awakening the people of Great Britain to a sense of the duty they owed to their fellow-subjects in the Indian empire. (Applause.)

Imperial Parliament.

Thursday, April 26.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

Mr. Price,—East India (Railways and Irrigation Work) Return presented showing the estimated position as regards capital expenditure of the several railways and irrigation works under construction in India on March 31, 1900, and the proposed expenditure thereon during 1900-1901, to lie upon the Table.

THE FAMINE IN INDIA.
PROPOSED NATIONAL GRANT.

Mr. Maclean asked the First Lord of the Treasury whether having in view the increased and unparalleled intensity of the famine in India and the inadequate response made in this country to the Lord Mayor's appeal to public charity, her Majesty's Government would reconsider their determination not to make a national grant to India. (Opposition cheers.)

Mr. Balfour: The famine in India is, as my hon. friend has justly observed, of a very serious character, but my noble friend the Secretary of State for India is most carefully watching the progress of events, and if it be needful to apply to the Imperial Parliament for assistance that appeal will be made without hesitation. I ought to add that the Government of India do not anticipate any difficulty at present in providing needful relief.

Friday, April 27.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THE FAMINE IN INDIA.
PROPOSED GRANT OF ONE MILLION STERLING.

Mr. Samuel Smith asked the Secretary of State for India whether his attention had been drawn to the report of Mr. Smeaton on the famine districts of India stating that the misery in parts of Bombay, Rajputana, and Central India was beyond description and unparalleled, and that contributions to the Famine Fund were urgently required:

And, whether, in view of the statement of Lord Curzon that charitable relief was urgently needed to supplement the relief given by the Indian Government, he would consider the expediency of making a grant of one million sterling to be applied to the same purposes as the Mansion House Fund.

Lord G. Hamilton: In reply to the hon. gentleman I must point out that the object of the Mansion House Fund and similar Funds is to obtain subscriptions from private individuals for the purpose of carrying on charitable relief work distinct from and outside the sphere of Government operations. Such work has in the past proved most beneficial in alleviating the current cases of distress and misery inseparable from widespread drought. But if Government supply the bulk of the Funds, as suggested in the question, the Fund would cease to be one raised by the public, and the work now done by private Committees would have to be taken over by Government officials. I am not prepared at a moment's notice to make such a vital and far-reaching change in the famine policy of the Indian Government.

PRESBYTERIAN TROOPS AND CANTONMENT CHURCHES.

Mr. Weir asked the Secretary of State for India whether Presbyterian ministers were not allowed to conduct services for the troops in the Cantonment Churches in India built at the public expense; and, if so, could arrangements be made such as would afford the troops stationed in India opportunities for attending Presbyterian services in these churches instead of in the open air.

Lord G. Hamilton: If the hon. member will refer to the papers on this subject which I laid on the Table before the recess he will see exactly how the matter stands, and what arrangements have been made for providing facilities of worship for Presbyterian troops.

THE BORROWED TROOPS.

Mr. Maclean asked the Under-Secretary of State for War if the depôts of those battalions of the British army in India which were serving in South Africa were now maintained at the cost of the Imperial Government.

Mr. Wyndham: Yes, sir.

Monday, April 30.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THE PLAGUE RIOT AT CAWNPORE.

Mr. Maclean asked the Secretary of State for India whether, since the plague riot took place at Cawnpore, the regulations had been modified and the compulsory removal of plague stricken Natives to hospital had been abolished, and why this change was not made before the riot broke out.

Lord G. Hamilton: The Viceroy has informed me by telegram that "the Lieutenant Governor of the North-West Provinces arrived at Cawnpore on the day after the riot. He found the tumult due in part to gross ignorance, partly to unwillingness to submit to any plague preventive regulations, and partly to false reports that had been fomented by Marwaris who are foreigners. The Lieutenant-Governor issued a notification explaining the plague regulations, and on April 16 (five days after the riot) shops were opened and business was resumed." I have received no further information on the subject of the hon. member's question; and I do not expect to receive any until detailed reports on the occurrences reach me.

Mr Maclean: Were the regulations modified after the riot had broken out?

Lord G. Hamilton: I cannot answer that question. Evidently they were not withdrawn.

REPLACEMENT OF HORSES SENT TO SOUTH AFRICA.

Mr. Maclean asked the Secretary of State for India what was the meaning of the entry in the Indian Financial Statement of twenty-two lakhs, or £150,000, on account of the replacement of additional horses sent to South Africa, and whether this sum would be repaid to India by the Imperial Government.

Lord G. Hamilton: All animals and stores supplied by the Indian Government to the Army in South Africa will be either replaced or paid for by the Imperial Government.

Repayments in respect of such supplies figure on the Receipts side of the Estimates; on the other hand the outlay on purchases to replace horses, as in the case in point, or other articles supplied to the Imperial Government, necessarily figures on the Expenditure side.

THE PURCHASE OF THE G.I.P. RAILWAY.

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for India whether he could inform the House of the principle on which the calculation was based whereon the Governor of the Bank of England fixed £2 17s. per cent. as the rate of interest in settling the annuity for the purchase of the Great India Peninsular Railway Company by the Government of India.

Lord G. Hamilton: The principle is defined in the contract as follows:—". . . . the rate of interest which shall be used in calculating such annuity being determined by the average rate of interest during the preceding two years received in London upon public obligations of the East India Company, and which shall be ascertained by reference to the Governor or Deputy Governor of the Bank of England for the time being.

The Governor of the Bank of England was asked to state his average rate, and he replied £2 17s. per cent.

THE PROPOSED FAMINE GRANT.
SUGGESTED "FEAR OF FINANCIAL INTERFERENCE."

Colonel Milward asked the First Lord of the Treasury, with reference to the famine now desolating India, whether her Majesty's Government would reconsider the question of a Grant in Aid, having especial regard to the unparalleled financial prosperity of this country, to the continuous calls upon the private benevolence of this Nation in connexion with the war in South Africa, and to the large contributions from the Native Princes and others in India to the war fund:

And, whether, seeing that the objections hitherto raised by the Indian Government to such Grants in Aid had arisen largely from the fear of the creation of a claim for financial interference, he would consider the advisability of placing the proposed Grant under the unfettered control of the Viceroy in Council.

Mr. Balfour said he had nothing to add to the answer he gave on this subject to the hon. member for Cardiff last Thursday. The hon. member might be assured that the progress of events in connexion with the famine in India was being carefully watched by her Majesty's Government.

INDIAN LABOURERS IN UGANDA.

Mr. Brodrick, in the course of his speech, in moving the vote "to authorise the issue out of the Consolidated Fund of £1,930,000 for the Uganda railway," said: First let me speak of the question of labour. A strong opinion was expressed in the House against the use of forced labour, and a pledge was given that this should be avoided, a pledge which has been rigidly observed. It would, no doubt, have been possible to obtain labour by force as the line was carried through tribal districts; but this was not deemed desirable or justifiable, so we had to depend on voluntary effort entirely. Now, voluntary effort does not go far in Africa, and we have not much to offer the tribes as recompense for undertaking the severe labour involved in railway construction. The result has been that, whereas it was estimated that actual Natives would provide something like half the labour required, the remainder being obtained from India, in practice it has been found that of 16,000 men employed, 14,000 had to be obtained from India and only 2,000 were tribal volunteers. In estimating the cost of labour that of the tribes was set down at 4d. per day and in some cases 6d., while Indian skilled labour could not be obtained under 1s. a day. With the cost of bringing Indians up country and repatriating them the actual expense would not come to less than 14d. per day; therefore the labour, forming the most important item, instead of being half of it at 4d. per day, had for seven-eighths of it to be paid for at the average rate of 14d. per day. Here I may perhaps refer to exaggerated reports which have appeared as to the rate of mortality among the labourers. I am unable to understand how these reports of terrible loss of life and of sickness have arisen. Last year, with an average of 16,700 men employed, the deaths per thousand from all causes, from attacks by wild beasts, diseases, and accidents, amounted to 29—not an excessive rate—and the average of sick was, and I believe now is, 7·4 per cent., while those invalided back to India amount to 1·07 per cent. This affords no justification for exaggerated estimates of mortality published in the Press.

Mr. Perks, in the course of his speech, said that he thought the Government ought to have employed a very much larger proportion of native African labour, especially in face of the fact that the Natives in Africa were dying in thousands of starvation.

Tuesday, May 1.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THE SUGAR DUTIES ACT.

Mr. Maclean asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the imports of cane sugar from the British Mauritius, which the Countervailing Duties Act passed last year was specially framed to protect, fell off in 1899-1900, while those from the foreign states of China and Java rose considerably:

Whether the cultivation of sugar in India had been stimulated by the Act:

And what was the object of maintaining an Act which yielded so little revenue.

Lord G. Hamilton: For the eleven months ending February the imports of Mauritius sugar into India were below those of the preceding years, but above those of the year 1896.

The importation from China and Java into India in the aggregate for the same periods showed a considerable increase over both preceding years.

I am unable to say what the acreage of sugar cultivation for 1899 in India was, as the drought has greatly disturbed the normal conditions of agriculture. The object of the Act was to establish equality of conditions between the Indian cultivator of sugar and the bounty-fed foreign importer so far as competition in India was concerned. This has been secured, and I have no intention of reverting to the old and inequitable state of things.

THE ARMY IN INDIA.

Sir Charles Dilke asked the Secretary of State for India what was the strength in non-commissioned officers and men of the forces on the Indian establishment in India on January 1, 1896, 1897, 1898, 1899, and 1900.

Lord G. Hamilton: The effective strength of non-commissioned officers and men of the British and Native forces in India on the dates mentioned was as follows:

	British.	Native.	Total.
January 1, 1896 ..	70,615	143,775	214,390
,, 1897 ..	70,400	144,672	215,072
,, 1898 ..	67,808	143,376	211,184
,, 1899 ..	68,578	146,363	214,941
,, 1900 ..	62,220	140,138	202,358

THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON INDIAN EXPENDITURE.

Mr. Maclean asked the First Lord of the Treasury, if her Majesty's Government proposed to give effect this Session to the recommendation of the Royal Commission on the Financial Relations of England and India, that the Treasury should make a grant of £50,000 a year to the India Office.

Mr. Balfour: In answer to the question I have to say that it is impossible for the Government to arrive in the course of the present Session at any detailed conclusion of policy in the direction recommended by the Royal Commission. The Royal Commissioners took five years to come to a conclusion, and we have only had that conclusion in our hands a very few days.

NOTICE OF MOTION.

The following Notice of Motion appears on the Order Paper of the House of Commons.

Mr. Samuel Smith,—Excise Administration (India),—To call attention to the administration of Excise in India, by which many liquor shops are being opened in various parts of India, in direct violation of the expressed protests of the neighbourhood, and in contradiction of the declared policy of the Government of India, as formulated in their Despatch to the Secretary of State, No. 29, February 4, 1890; and to move a resolution. [An early day.]

THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON INDIAN EXPENDITURE.

THE MINORITY REPORT.

The following is the text of the Minority Report (which is signed by Sir W. Wedderburn, M.P., Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, and Mr. W. S. Caine) continued from page 207 of our last issue:—

44. With regard to the increase in the land revenue there are one or two very striking facts which appear to call for consideration. It is not contended that these facts inevitably point one way, but it is suggested that they throw the burden of proof on those who assert that the large increase of land revenue in recent years is not an increase of taxation.

Reviewing, as far as the figures published in successive Statistical Abstracts will allow, the period 1875-6—1895-6, taking 1885-6 as an intermediate point, the following facts appear to be relevant to the question at issue:—

			Rx.
Stat. Abst.	Land Revenue (gross) 1875-6	..	21,540,000
	,, ,, ,, 1885-6	..	22,590,000
	,, ,, ,, 1895-6	..	26,200,000
	Increase 1875-85		Rx. 1,050,000 or 5 °/ₒ
F. S. 1897, p. 41 (P. P., No. 193).	Increase 1885-95		Rx. 3,610,000
	Deduct for Upper Burma ..	..	750,000
	Corrected Increase 1885-95		Rx. 2,860,000 or 13 °/ₒ

Here, then, is a remarkable difference between the rate of increase in the two periods. It should be noted that so far as the receipts from land tax are an indication, India had recovered from the great famine of 1877 by the end of the financial year 1878-9. (Stat. Abst.) The varying rate of increase happens to coincide with a varying prosperity in the finances of the Government of India; a remarkable feature of this variation being that when the general finances were most prosperous the increase from land revenue was less, and when the general financial situation gave cause for grave anxiety, the increase from land revenue was much more. (Para. 101 of Report, p. 33.) The former period was one of "financial prosperity" "happy in reduction of taxation"; the latter period was one of financial disturbance, "marked by increase of taxation." In the one case Government was remitting taxes, in the other case Government was casting about for fresh sources of revenue. Would not this state of things influence the policy of land assessment at settlement revisions?

45. Another remarkable contrast is afforded by a comparison between the relation of increase of area actually cropped to increase of land revenue. Statistics before 1885-86 are not available, and even for that year the figures for Bengal and Ajmere (these latter quite unimportant) are wanting. The area actually cropped in British India (excluding Bengal, Upper Burma, and Ajmere) in 1885-86 and 1895-96 respectively, was as follows:—

		Acres.
Stat. Abst. 1887, p. 53.	1885-6	128,250,000
Stat. Abst. 1897, p. 140.	1895-6	132,500,000
	Increase in area actually cropped	4,250,000 or 3⅓ °/ₒ

For the same years the gross land revenue for British India (excluding Bengal and Upper Burma) was as follows:—

		Rx.
Stat. Abst. 1897, p. 93, and F. S. 1897, p. 41.	1885-6	18,750,000
	1895-6	21,550,000
	Increase in revenue ..	2,800,000 or 15 °/ₒ

There are complications of irrigation, current fallows, and double cropping which may to some extent account for the apparent repugnance between the two percentages, but *primâ facie* the figures suggest that the increase of 15 per cent. in the land revenue should be apportioned as to 3⅓ per cent. to increased cultivation and as to 11⅔ per cent. to enhanced rates of assessment, *i.e.*, to increased taxation.

46. There remains the most suggestive contrast of all; and that is the contrast between the rate of increase in the land revenue of Bengal (where the permanent settlement prevails) and that for the rest of India (excluding Upper Burma) which is subject to periodic revisions of land assessments.

Land Revenue (Gross).

Bengal.

Stat. Abst.	1875-76.	1885-86.	1895-96.
	Rx. 3,788,000	Rx. 3,856,000	Rx. 3,905,000

		°/ₒ
Increase 1st 10 years	68,000	1·8
,, 2nd ,, ...	49,000	1·3
Increase 20 years	117,000	3·1

BRITISH INDIA

(*Excluding Bengal and Upper Burma*).

1875-76.	1885-86.	1895-96.
Rx. 17,750,000	Rx. 18,750,000	Rx. 21,550,000

	Rx.	%
Increase 1st 10 years ..	1,000,000	5·6
Stat. Abst. ,, 2nd ,, ..	2,800,000	15·0
Increase 20 years ..	3,800 000	21·5

It is suggested that the facts indicated by these three contrasts call for careful examination; and that until they have been examined and explained estimates of revenue elasticity based *inter alia* upon the classification of all increase in land revenue as increase not due to an increase of taxation have but small statistical value.

47. It is not quite clear upon what grounds a distinction is drawn between new taxation in the form of "Provincial Rates" and any other form of new taxation. (Para. 102 of Report.) No evidence has been adduced before us to show that these Provincial Rates were ear-marked to meet a special new expenditure, and reserved for that purpose alone. Their allocation to provincial governments was only part of a general scheme of partial financial devolution. In the form in which the accounts are kept to-day there is no special head of expenditure corresponding with this special head of revenue. In fact Provincial Rates would appear to be one of the principal sources of revenue raised towards meeting the general expenditure. Increase of expenditure is generally due to policy of some kind, but no reasons appear to be adduced why the special policy of developing provincial finance, in so far as it led to increased expenditure and, as a consequence, to increased taxation, should be removed from a general survey of the financial situation. It is obvious that if we include "Provincial Rates" the taxation of 1883-4 and 1884-5 was heavier than that of 1861-2; and it would follow that it would no longer be correct to state as is done in para. 102 of our colleagues' Report, that

the burthen of taxation . . . . at the close of the period [1861-1884] did not greatly differ from that which prevailed before the Crown undertook direct responsibility for the government of the Indian Empire. (Report, p. 33.)

This distinction is also drawn in para. 109 at p. 39 of our colleagues' Report, and to that extent helps to vitiate the conclusions there arrived at.

48. So far we have indicated our objections to the review of Indian finance contained in paras. 95-115 of the Report on general grounds. We have, however, other and more specific criticisms to pass upon the manner in which the figures have been dealt with. We venture to give one or two illustrations taken from this part of our colleagues' Report.

49. In para. 103 (pp. 34 and 35) it is estimated that in 1882 the salt duty was reduced as nearly as circumstances permitted to the level of the duty before the Mutiny. At the top of page 36 the amount of remission of taxation under the head of salt in 1884-5, as compared with 1861-2, is estimated at Rx. 1,400,000, which was the estimated loss to the revenue made by Sir E. Baring in 1882, with reference to his reduction of the duties prevailing in 1881, and had no reference so far as we can gather from contemporary documents, to a reduction of the salt duties as from 1861-2. (P. P. 289 of 1885, p. 157.) Now this estimate of Sir E. Baring's may, of course, be accepted so long as it is used in the sense in which Sir E. Baring meant it to be used. A reference to the "Moral and Material Progress, etc., of India, 1882-83," p. 157, will show clearly to what Sir E. Baring's estimate refers. A table there shows the rates of salt duty prevailing in 1881-2 (the year before Sir E. Baring's reduction of the duty) and that in 1882-3 (when the reduction came into effect). From this it will be seen that the reduction of 1882-3 in Northern India, Madras, and Bombay (consuming over 60 per cent. of the salt taxed in India) was from 5s.=2½ Rs.=40 annas to 32 annas, and in Bengal (consuming over 30 per cent. of the total salt) from 5s. 8d.=45 annas to 32 annas. These were very different rates to those prevailing in 1861-2 as given in a footnote to page 64 of the Report.

The following table will show clearly the magnitude of the miscalculations involved :—

RATES OF SALT DUTY PER MAUND.

(*See* P. P. 289 of 1885, p. 157, and Report, p. 34, footnote.)

	1861-2. The Basis of Comparison in the Report.	1881-2. The Basis of Sir E. Baring's Estimate of Reduction.
	Annas.	Annas.
Bengal	52	45
Bombay	20	40
Madras	20	40
N.-W. P. ..	48	
Oudh	48	40
Punjab	48	

Obviously an estimate based on a reduction from rates ranging from 40 to 45 annas is not applicable to a change from rates ranging from 20 to 52 annas.

50. So far as a comparison between the rate of salt duty before the Mutiny and that prevailing in 1884-5 is implied, (Stat. Abst.) we venture to point out that the consumption of salt in Madras and Bombay combined being a constant of about 35 per cent. more than in Bengal (although the population of the latter is greater), it would follow that an increase of duty of about 150 per cent. (from an average of 13 annas—the rate in Madras and Bombay in 1858—to 32 annas) on the larger consumption, must very considerably "overbalance" the reduction of duty by 20 per cent. (from 40 annas—the rate in Bengal in 1858—to 32 annas) on the smaller consumption. We submit, therefore, that there is no warrant for the conclusion reached in our colleagues' Report (p. 34) that the salt duty in 1882 was "reduced . . . . as nearly as circumstances permitted to the level of the duty before the Mutiny."

51. It would be beyond our province here to criticise in detail the various estimates contained in this part of our colleagues' Report, but we would briefly refer to two other instances in which, we submit, the best available data have not been used in arriving at the figures given in the general review of income and expenditure. These, with the illustrations quoted above (paras. 49 and 50), will serve to explain why we cannot accept those estimates in whole or in part. These two instances we take from the review of the period 1884-5 to 1895-6, and relate to salt and Customs.

52. With regard to salt, in para. 108 of our colleagues' Report at p. 38, the increase due to the increase in the duty in 1895-6 as compared with 1884-5 is estimated at Rx. 1,500,000 on undisclosed data. Now, we submit that it is possible to form a more accurate estimate by taking into account the different amounts consumed and rates of duty levied in the two years in question. The sum is a simple one. The rates of duty before and after January 19, 1888, were respectively :—

(F. S. 1888-89, para. 57.)

	Salt Tax per maund. Jan. 19, 1888.	Since Jan. 19, 1888.
India	Rs. 2	Rs. 2·8
Burma	As. 3	Re. 1

The consumption of salt in 1895-96 was :—

(Stat. Abst., 1899 [C. 9519], p. 108.)

	Maunds.
India	33,443,000
Burma	1,744,000
Total ..	35,187,000

This consumption at the different rates would produce :—

	Rx.
(1) In India.	
At Rs. 2	6,688,600
At Rs. 2 8 an increase of 25 per cent., or	1,672,150
(2) In Burma.	
At As. 3	32,700
At Rupee 1	174,000
Increase	Rx. 141,300

Therefore the total increased product of taxation in 1895-6 due to the enhancement of the duty on January 19, 1888, may be estimated thus :—

In India	Rx. 1,672,000
In Burma	141,000
Total ..	1,813,000

A far higher figure than that—Rx. 1,500,000—shown in the Report.

PUBLIC MEETINGS ON INDIAN QUESTIONS.

THE WORK OF THE BRITISH COMMITTEE.

Miss Alison Garland, who attended the recent sittings of the Indian National Congress at Lucknow as the delegate of the British Committee, will address the following meetings upon Indian questions, with special reference to the famine :—

May 4. Drawing-room meeting at Muswell Hill.
,, 6. Bolton (Labour Church.)
,, 7. ,, (W. L. A.)
,, 8. Darwen (Liberal League.)
,, 9. Bacup (L. A.)
,, 11. Oakworth, near Keighley (L. A.)
,, 13. Leeds (Labour Church).
,, 14. Leek.
,, 15. Sheffield (afternoon). Hallam and Brightside (W. L. A.) (evening).
,, 18. County Forum, Manchester.
,, 20. Rochdale (I. L. P.)
,, 21. Wigan (W. L. A.)
,, 22. Willaston (W. L A.)
,, 24. W. Bristol.

NOW READY.

CONGRESS GREEN BOOK.—No. III.

The Proposed Separation OF Judicial and Executive Duties in India.

MEMORIAL

FROM

Rt. Hon. Lord HOBHOUSE, K.C.S.I.
(late Legal Member of the Viceroy's Council, Member of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council).

Rt. Hon. Sir RICHARD GARTH, Q.C.
(late Chief Justice of Bengal).

Rt. Hon. Sir RICHARD COUCH
(late Chief Justice of Bengal, Member of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council).

Sir CHARLES SARGENT
(late Chief Justice of Bombay.)

Sir WILLIAM MARKBY, K.C.I.E.
(late Judge of the High Court, Calcutta).

Sir JOHN BUDD PHEAR
(late Judge of the High Court, Calcutta, and Chief Justice of Ceylon).

Sir JOHN SCOTT, K.C.M.G.
(late Judge of the High Court, Bombay).

Sir W. WEDDERBURN, Bart., M.P.
(late Judge of the High Court, Bombay).

Sir ROLAND K. WILSON, Bart.
(late Reader in Indian Law at the University of Cambridge).

Mr. HERBERT J. REYNOLDS, C.S.I.
(late Member of the Bengal Legislative Council).

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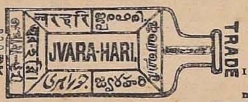

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